

R1 CAC Meeting of 10/01/2014

6 pm

FWP Public Meeting Room

Present: Jay Sheffield, Mike Rooney, Charles Abell, Daniel Short, Mike Robertson, Chuck Hunt, Ron Hawkinson, Larry Lack, Tony Anderson, Jim Vashro, Brian Marotz, John Fraley, Jim Williams, Alan Wood, Lee Anderson, Mark Deleray, and Martha Abbrescia

Introductions all the way around since this is the first meeting of the season.

Brian Marotz / Acting Regional Supervisor

Brian gave his background with the department, and invited the CAC to contact him.

John Fraley reviews the Charter and Function of the CAC.

Reviews some CAC accomplishments

- ungulate problem - should we feed or not during difficult winter of 1996/97
- public survey of attitudes toward FWP
- hunting heritage - expert brought in from MN
- hunt plan for Lost Trail Wildlife Refuge
- Westslope Cutthroat Conservation Project - CAC served as a forum and helped with public perception.
- Walleye issue in Noxon - helped clarify the comments

Manager Reports:

John Fraley - reviews Bull Trout Redd counts

- John has been doing redd counts in the Great Bear Wilderness for 34 years
- He showed the group video clips of what redds look like
- Areas where they typically exist in the streams
- A little overall history of the bull trout

Mark Deleray - Fisheries update

- Perennial Pine Grove Pond Update
 - 2010, Robin Street donated land to FWP and it has been made into a kids fishing pond. It has 20k - 30k angler days...much more

- popular than anyone anticipated.
- Improvements that are happening - in process of purchasing an addition 4.25 acres (handout). Will help protect the area. Another long 5 acre piece has been donated by the Whitefish Credit Union...another tremendous asset. It will soon be over 22 acres. Robin Street donated another 1/3 acre for additional parking.
- Through grants and other donations of the community, paving among other things are taking place at Pine Grove pond.
- Brook trout stock
 - Changed policy re: planting brook trout in western MT.
 - We will be enter back into the brook trout stocking in R1...lakes are chosen based on an established criteria
 - ▶ Brook trout were historically stocked in these lakes
 - ▶ Brook trout will not be able to get out
 - ▶ Brook trout already occur in surrounding lakes
 - Why - we constantly get requests
 - ▶ It's a very responsible way to do it because they can't get out.
- Chancy Jeschke & Tony Anderson have asked about reconvening an Angler Forum
 - My suggestion is to work it through this group
 - Tony brought up that the group should focus on specific projects or interests to try to achieve as a group.
 - ▶ (CAC thinks this might be a good idea....needs to be a working committee not a debating committee.)
 - ▶ Bucket biology in the region has to stop!
- Who will be interested in being in this working group? Contact Mark Deleray at mdeleray@mt.gov and John Fraley at jfraley@mt.gov

Jim Williams - Wildlife

- Alan Wood - working on conservation easement on Haskill & Trumbull Creek. Also in Libby area been working on some restoration projects along the Kootenai River.
- Annual WT deer reports - good thing the CAC started paying attention to wolves a few years ago! Will send you the .pdf via email.
 - WT Deer density map reviewed in R1
 - WT Buck harvest trends
 - Antlerless harvest - fluctuates the most
 - Hunter harvest surveys
 - We're starting to slowly climb out and populations are increasing.

- Hunter check stations used to reconstruct the population. Check stations should see an increase in 3.5 year old bucks this year.
- Example of different check station results - the public concern hot spot looks to be Libby.

Mike Robertson asks if black bear numbers are up? JW - the harvest did go up in a few areas. Thinks that this summer has been unbelievably productive for bears. R1 averages a bear per square mile. We harvest 500 each year.

Lee Anderson - Enforcement

- Whitefish River has proposed amendment to make a 3-mile reach non-motorized (from RR trestle to JP bridge). The WF City council came to us wanting to make this change. This now goes to the FWP Commission on 10/16/14. FWP's recommendation is to maintain the status quo with a change to allow for a minimum speed to maintain upstream travel.
- Enforcement installed two time-lapse cameras to count boats and types of boats (on RR trestle and JP bridge). Did not see much motorized use and only 1 obvious violation. The most common violation is lack of PFD's. It's more of a social issue than resource/safety issue.
- The City Council unanimously supports the closure of motorized vessels.

License Funding Advisory Committee - more news to follow.

Before we get started on round table - want to let you know that Commissioner Wolfe is sorry that he was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

ROUND TABLE:

Larry Lack - communication with other organizations - need OLOC (Open Lines of Communication)

- How do we overcome wildlife issues from being so politically driven? As a group, we are not going to win this war talking just to each other. We need to open up communication with all the people that disagree with us.
- Listen, ask questions and don't take sides....listen to the devil's advocate. Open lines of communication...will get more of them on our side.

Jay Sheffield - been a very strong supporter of FWP

- The public would very much like to support you....they need to know more about what our game dollars are doing. Take for example: John Fraley's redd counts.....My Gosh! This guy has been going up these streams for 34 years!! It was very interesting to hear about the bull trout life cycle, how they build redds, etc. Tout the good things that FWP is doing!

Ron Hawkinson - mostly associates with hunters

- Most complainants are about the number of predators, not only wolves but an abundance of cats. It's no longer uncommon to see mountain lions in the daytime
- Number of outfitters is excessive....18 of them from T Falls to the Idaho border! Is going to set up meeting with the USFS to see how this process works
- Guides - being hired from California and they don't really know how things work. What are their qualifications? As a State can we mandate a training program for these guides?
- Landowners - this group has a lot of negative things to say about FWP. I.e., why can't FWP keep the elk out of my alfalfa...etc?

Chuck Hunt -

- Whitefish Lake issue - be sure to call the FWP Commissioners about how you feel on this issue. If they don't get feedback from us...they are going to make their decision based on who knows what.
- Funding issue - get involved....call / email your legislators to let them know how you feel on this issue. Just when you think things are going to get better with funding....they seem to get worse. With the shortfall the FWP is going to be faced with in 2017...there are going to be many programs as well as people cut. Really think about how important these things are to you. Make your voice heard. Our opportunities for the things we love are managed by people.....make sure your legislators know what you want and that the money is needed to make these things happen.
- A lot of vandalism goes on behind closed gates...when you see illegal activity, get the plate numbers and phone TIPMONT. I do not want Plum Creek, Stoltze etc, to close their lands due to the boneheads breaking the rules, and smashing gates. This sort of vandalism costs a lot of money each year. It is a great honor that we get to use

their land.

- MACK days - website has the Tribes implementation plan for gill-netting. Their goal is to remove 100k lake trout. Our real issue is by-catch (e.g. lake whitefish) and Flathead Wildlife has hired an attorney because we do not want to see any gill netting on the north end of the lake. We will keep people in tune with how this pans out.
- Sage Grouse - by Sept 2015, the Obama administration has to determine whether to put these on the ESA. That would be a sad day. JW - there have been two recent triumphs in MT on wolverines and the Artic Grayling.

Mike Robertson -

- Big game in MT up the north fork - when I learned hunting up there....there were always wolf tracks. The deer are just more wary because of the wolves. From an education standpoint, let people know this.
- Westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) project still needs more education - groups still believe that you are simply killing one trout to put in another trout. They don't realize what will happen if WCT get listed and how that will close down our playgrounds. We need to remind folks that there is a really good purpose for why things are happening. Website address: <http://fwp.mt.gov/regions/r1/wctproject/> Send people with questions to Matt Boyer, Joel Tohtz, Brian Marotz.

Dan Short - this is going to be fun

- Bull trout recovery plan - comments are currently being accepted by the USFWS at this time. They are really a neat species.
- Want to be on Chuck's distribution list and I too want to urge people to pay attention to the legislative session. Sign up for legislative alerts, etc. There are some legislators that continually disagree with FWP. The legislators are used to seeing the paid lobbyists every day. But the impact of the guy that gets up at 5 am to drive to Helena to make their voice heard does in fact have clout.
- Show me a business that can't raise its prices for 10 years. That is a model built on failure! For what we get in this state....we get a real bargain! Show me anything that hasn't gone up in price.... I urge people to look at these increases and see them for the modest things that they are.

Charles Abell -

- There are over 400 lobbyists in Helena.
- We open grouse season way too early - need to open maybe a couple of weeks later.
- Complemented John Fraley for his media outreach. Wants media to cover more FWP news.
- Would like to see catch & release only for WCT in the Whitefish Drainage as well as the Flathead. Also think you should be able to take Pike above the trestle.
- Closed gates - Seems like a lot of people have keys to DNRC lands.

Mike Rooney -

- The Western News won't take my columns. The Editor is not interested in non-paid columns. May look into other newspapers.
- Wants to be on the Angler sub-committee
- Need to add woody debris for habitat in the Kootenai River - pretty interesting - you can't get a lot of woody debris from the USFS! WE have to go out and buy it from someone!

Tony Anderson -

- Moved here from Billings in the 80's because of all the water and opportunities. I decided to live this summer like it was my last. I caught one of those huge Tiger Muskies from Horseshoe Lake. I caught the biggest bass I've ever caught in my life along with the biggest Pike I've ever caught. AS if that isn't enough, I hiked into Granite Creek.....I caught the largest mountain whitefish that I've ever seen! I have had the most spectacular summer that a fisherman could ever want and it happened right here in Region 1.
- Shocked to hear that they had found 2 Pike in LMR - it took the wind out of me!

Leo Marnell just had heart surgery and won't be back to the CAC until April.

FACEBOOK - we are posting more things on Facebook. If any advisors want to help, we value your input.

Next meeting will be: First week of December, Tuesday or Thursday night

works best....except for the first Tuesday of the month.

Meeting set for Tuesday, 12/9/14, at 6 pm at FWP Public Meeting

Room....hopefully Gary Wolfe can attend. We will check with Gary and get back to the group on a final date....